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KREEMER
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SIX
OF 6

SKREEMER™

Created by Peter Milligan & Brett Ewins

part six
"Finnegan's Wake."

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SKREEMER 6
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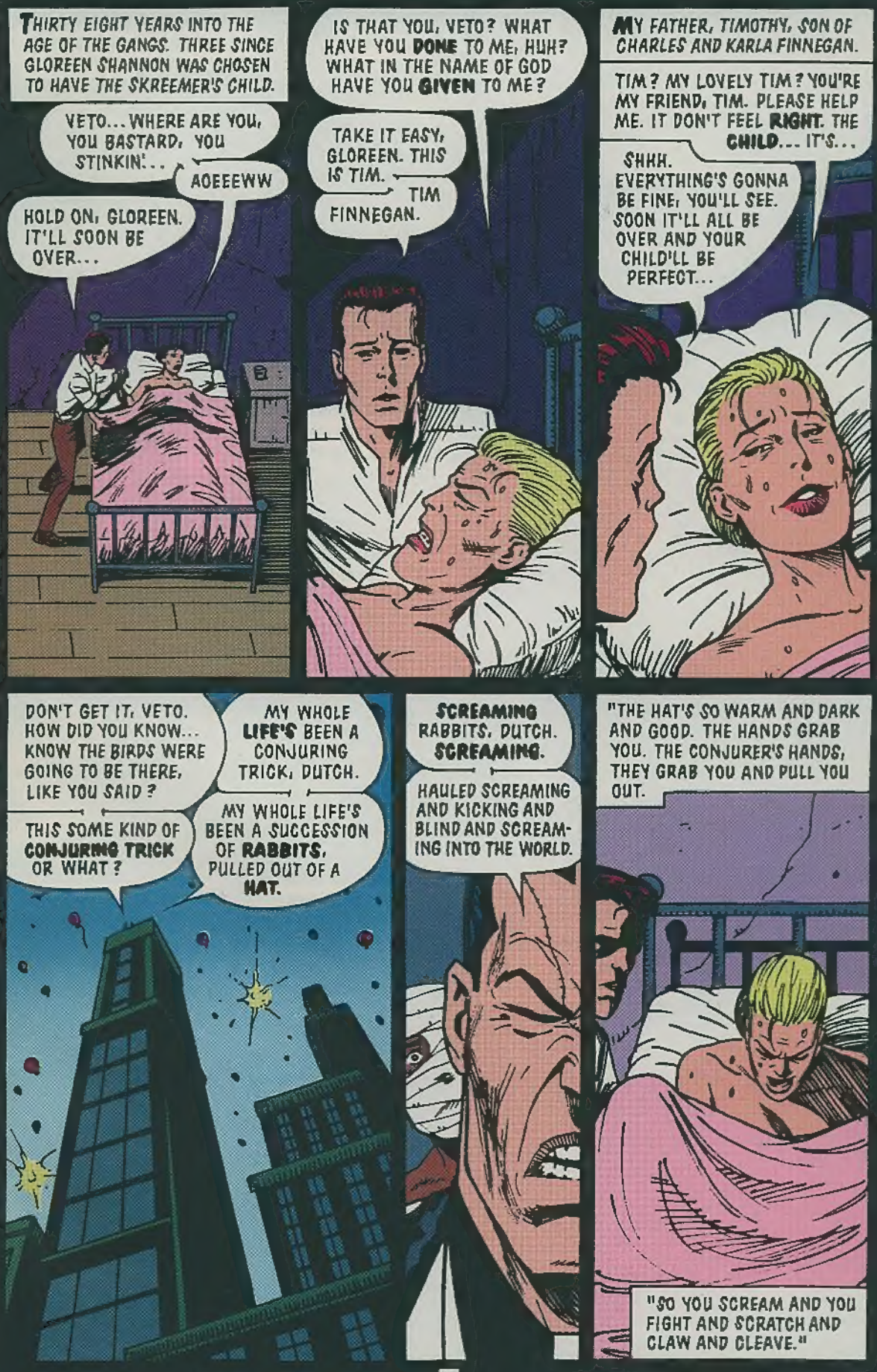
THE BALLOONS ARE BURSTING OVER THE CITY. BUT THE BALLOONS ARE EMPTY. AND THE CITY IS BURNING. AND MAYBE I'M GETTING DRUNK.
THOSE BIRDS, DUTCH. DO YOU SEE THEM? ON THE EDGE. TWO WHITE BIRDS, FIGHTING OVER A WORM.
DO YOU SEE THEM, DUTCH?
NO, VETO. THERE'S NOTHING THERE. NO BIRDS. NO WORM. NOTHING.
YOU'RE GOING **CRAZY**, VETO.
OR MAYBE YOU'VE **ALWAYS** BEEN CRAZY.
I HEARD WHAT **BUD MACADAM** SAID. JESUS, IT'S CRAZY AND SICK ENOUGH TO COME UP WITH A SCAM LIKE CREATING A **NEW PLAGUE**...
BUT THEN TO MAKE SURE IT WILL **FAIL**, AND THEN TO **FORGET** YOU'VE MADE SURE IT WILL FAIL. THAT'S **MORE** THAN CRAZY AND SICK.
THAT'S **EERIE**, VETO.
YOU HEAR ME, VETO? EERIE.
YOU **WANTED** TO FAIL, IS THAT IT?
OR WAS EVEN **YOUR** CONSCIENCE UNABLE TO LIVE WITH A PLAN LIKE THAT? EH?
NO, DUTCH. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. BUT I'LL **MAKE** YOU UNDERSTAND. I'LL TELL YOU **EVERYTHING**.
LOOK BEHIND YOU, DUTCH.
IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL.


THIRTY EIGHT YEARS INTO THE AGE OF THE GANGS. THREE SINCE GLOREEN SHANNON WAS CHOSEN TO HAVE THE SKREEMER'S CHILD.
VETO... WHERE ARE YOU, YOU BASTARD, YOU STINKIN'...
AOEEEWW
HOLD ON, GLOREEN. IT'LL SOON BE OVER...
IS THAT YOU, VETO? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME, HUH? WHAT IN THE NAME OF GOD HAVE YOU GIVEN TO ME?
TAKE IT EASY, GLOREEN. THIS IS TIM.
TIM FINNEGAN.
MY FATHER, TIMOTHY, SON OF CHARLES AND KARLA FINNEGAN.
TIM? MY LOVELY TIM? YOU'RE MY FRIEND, TIM. PLEASE HELP ME. IT DON'T FEEL RIGHT. THE CHILD... IT'S...
SHHH. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE FINE, YOU'LL SEE. SOON IT'LL ALL BE OVER AND YOUR CHILD'LL BE PERFECT...
DON'T GET IT, VETO. HOW DID YOU KNOW... KNOW THE BIRDS WERE GOING TO BE THERE, LIKE YOU SAID?
THIS SOME KIND OF CONJURING TRICK OR WHAT?
MY WHOLE LIFE'S BEEN A CONJURING TRICK, DUTCH.
MY WHOLE LIFE'S BEEN A SUCCESSION OF RABBITS, PULLED OUT OF A HAT.
SCREAMING RABBITS, DUTCH. SCREAMING.
HAULED SCREAMING AND KICKING AND BLIND AND SCREAMING INTO THE WORLD.
"THE HAT'S SO WARM AND DARK AND GOOD. THE HANDS GRAB YOU. THE CONJURER'S HANDS, THEY GRAB YOU AND PULL YOU OUT.
"SO YOU SCREAM AND YOU FIGHT AND SCRATCH AND CLAW AND CLEAVE."

NO. BEFORE THAT. BACK, BEFORE THE HAT AND THE RABBITS. MY FATHER.
I SAW HIM DIE. I SAW A ONE-EYED MAN TWIST A KNIFE INTO HIS BELLY. SAW HIM TURN THE BLADE LIKE A CORKSCREW...
I SAW MY FATHER DIE, DUTCH.
"AND IT WAS SUCH A RELIEF.
"SUCH A RELIEF TO WATCH MY FATHER BEING GUTTED, AT LAST."
THAT EXPLOSION. VICTORIA'S GETTING CLOSER. WE BOTH LOVED VICKY, DIDN'T WE? AND NOW SHE'S COMING TO MY FUNERAL.
MY MOTHER HAD A FUNERAL, A LONG TIME AGO.
"MY FATHER THREW DIRT ONTO THE WOODEN BOX IN THE GROUND. IN THE BOX WAS MY MOTHER.
"MY MOTHER'S NAME WAS HELEN BROWN."
MY FATHER WAS MARRIED WHEN HE MET MY MOTHER. HE WAS MARRIED TO A WOMAN HE DESCRIBED AS BEING COLDER THAN HIS PATIENTS.
MY FATHER WAS A PATHOLOGIST.
THIS HAPPENED ABOUT ONE YEAR BEFORE THE FALL.

"ONE YEAR BEFORE THE FALL. AND EVERYTHING WAS FALLING. FALLING APART.
"EVERYWHERE THE CRACKS WERE SHOWING. LIKE NOW. DIFFERENT CRACKS, BUT THE SAME.
"MY FATHER'S WORK KEPT HIM FROM HOME MUCH OF THE TIME. AND IT PROBABLY KEPT HIM SANE.
" THE ORDERED ROUTINE OF THE AUTOPSY, THE PRECISION OF THE SCALPEL, THE CERTAINTY OF A SPLENIC CYST, THE COMFORT OF A DISSECTED LIVER..."
I CAN SAY ALL THIS SO, SO UNHESITATINGLY, I CAN TELL THIS STORY SO EASILY, BECAUSE I HAVE OFTEN TOLD IT, TO MYSELF, ONLY EVER TO MYSELF.
MY FATHER, HE WOULD DREAD BEING HOME WITH HIS WIFE. HE HATED HER.
"SHE LOATHED HIM. WHEN HE BEGAN STAYING EVEN LATER AT WORK, IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD, WITH THE CORPSES. SHE DID NOT COMPLAIN.
"OR AT LEAST, HER INCESSANT COMPLAINING GREW NO WORSE.
"BUT OFTEN HE WOULD NOT BE AT WORK. HE WOULD BE WALKING, FOR HOURS ON END, EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW IT WAS DANGEROUS.
"AND AS HE WALKED HE WOULD FEEL LIKE ONE OF HIS SCALPELS, CUTTING INTO THE ROTTEN FLESH OF THE WORLD, DELVING INTO THE UNSEEN, THE UNMENTIONED TISSUE OF LIFE."

"HE SAW MY MOTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME BY THE RIVER. SHE SMILED AS HE PASSED AND SHE PULLED OPEN HER SHIRT.

"HE HAD NEVER FELT ANYTHING SO **INTENSELY** IN HIS LIFE.

"HE PUT HIS HAND IN HIS POCKET, TO FEEL FOR HIS MONEY. HIS HAND WAS SHAKING.

"SHE TOOK HIS HAND IN HERS.

"SOON, MY FATHER HAD TAKEN HELEN BROWN AWAY FROM THE RIVER AND THE STREETS AND THE DOORWAYS. AND HE GAVE HER A SMALL APARTMENT.

"HE LOVED HER. SHE PROBABLY LOVED HIM IN HER WAY.

"ONE NIGHT, HE TOOK HER TO SEE HIS PLACE OF WORK, TOOK HER TO THE COLD SLABS AND COLD CORPSES.

"SHE WAS BREATHLESS.

"HE WAS INFLAMED.

"THEY MADE LOVE RIGHT THERE. ON A SLAB.

"A SEED THAT GREW INTO ME WAS PLANTED."

MY FATHER OCCUPIED A WORLD WHERE THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ARE IN CONSTANT COMMUNION. IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DISPOSE OF HIS WIFE.
AFTER HE HAD KILLED HER.

"AFTER HE HAD POISONED HER WITH **PURE ALCOHOL**, AND HAD WATCHED HER CONVULSIONS, HER BLINDNESS, HER SPASMS, HER AGONY.
"IT WAS ALL VERY, VERY SIMPLE.
"AND NOT UNENJOYABLE.

"MONTHS LATER, MY MOTHER WRITHED ON AN UNMADE BED. OUTSIDE, THE THUNDER WAS STILL RUMBLING. IT WAS THE FIRST DAY AFTER THE FALL.
"MY MOTHER'S APARTMENT, WHICH SHE WAS SO PROUD OF, THE FIRST REAL HOME SHE'D EVER HAD, HAD BEEN DAMAGED.

"THE HANDRAILS HAD BEEN BLOWN FROM THE LANDING. THERE WAS JUST A ROUGH EDGE.
"AND THEN A FIVE STORY FALL."

IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF THE FALL. I MOVED, MOVED IN THE DARK. I TWISTED AND TURNED. I FELT MYSELF BEING STRANGLED.
I FELT THE KICK OF THE UTERUS...

"I FELT THE CONJURER'S HANDS.
"PULLING, PULLING ME OUT OF THE WARMTH AND THE DARK.
"AND I SCREAMED."

"AND I SCREAMED. AND SO DID MY MOTHER. MY FATHER WAS USELESS.

"HE JUST LOOKED ON. HELPLESS, PARALYZED BY THE DRAMA OF LIFE AND DEATH, THE ANATOMY LAID BARE AT LAST.

"WE SCREAMED. AND IN MY BLIND AND PRIMITIVE THRASHINGS I DID AWFUL THINGS TO HELEN BROWN.

"HER LIMBS TANGLED IN SHEETS, BODY JERKING IN TIME TO MINE, IN A BED OF PISS AND BLOOD AND SHIT AND THE SLOPS OF HER WOMB...

"AND THEN I WAS OUT AND THE CORD WAS CUT AND MY MOTHER WAS DEAD AND HE HELD ME, IN THE TERRIBLE LIGHT, BLOODY AND BRUTAL.

"AND HE LOOKED AT HER.

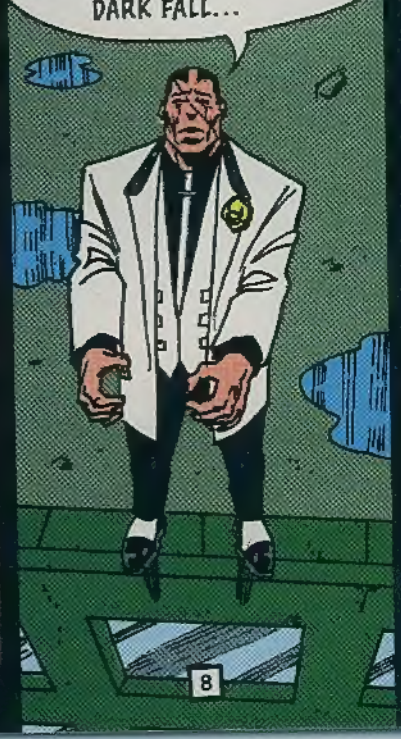
"HER SPENT BODY WRAPPED IN HER BLOODY WINDING SHEET... MY POOR MOTHER.

"AND THEN WE BOTH LOOKED AT EACH OTHER. FATHER AND SON. BOTH KILLERS OF WOMEN. BOTH COVERED IN BLOOD. BOTH SCREAMING.

"BOTH DAMNED."

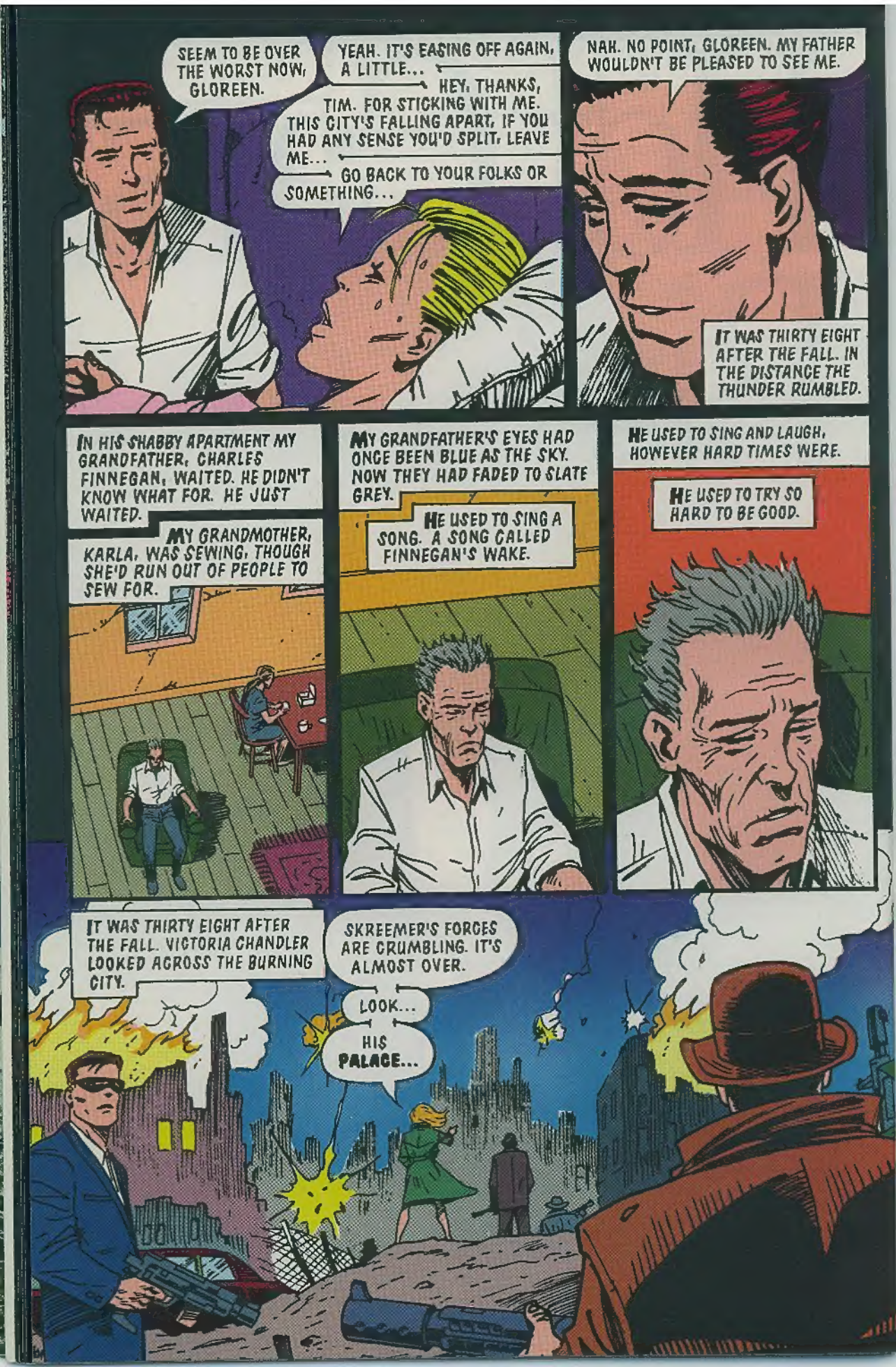
HE CARRIED ME TO THE LANDING, TO THE EDGE WHERE THE HANDRAILS WERE MISSING. HE STOOD ON THE EDGE. HE HELD ME OUT, OVER THE EDGE.

HE HELD ME OVER THE ABYSS. I REMEMBER, STARING DOWN, DOWN AT THE DARK FALL...

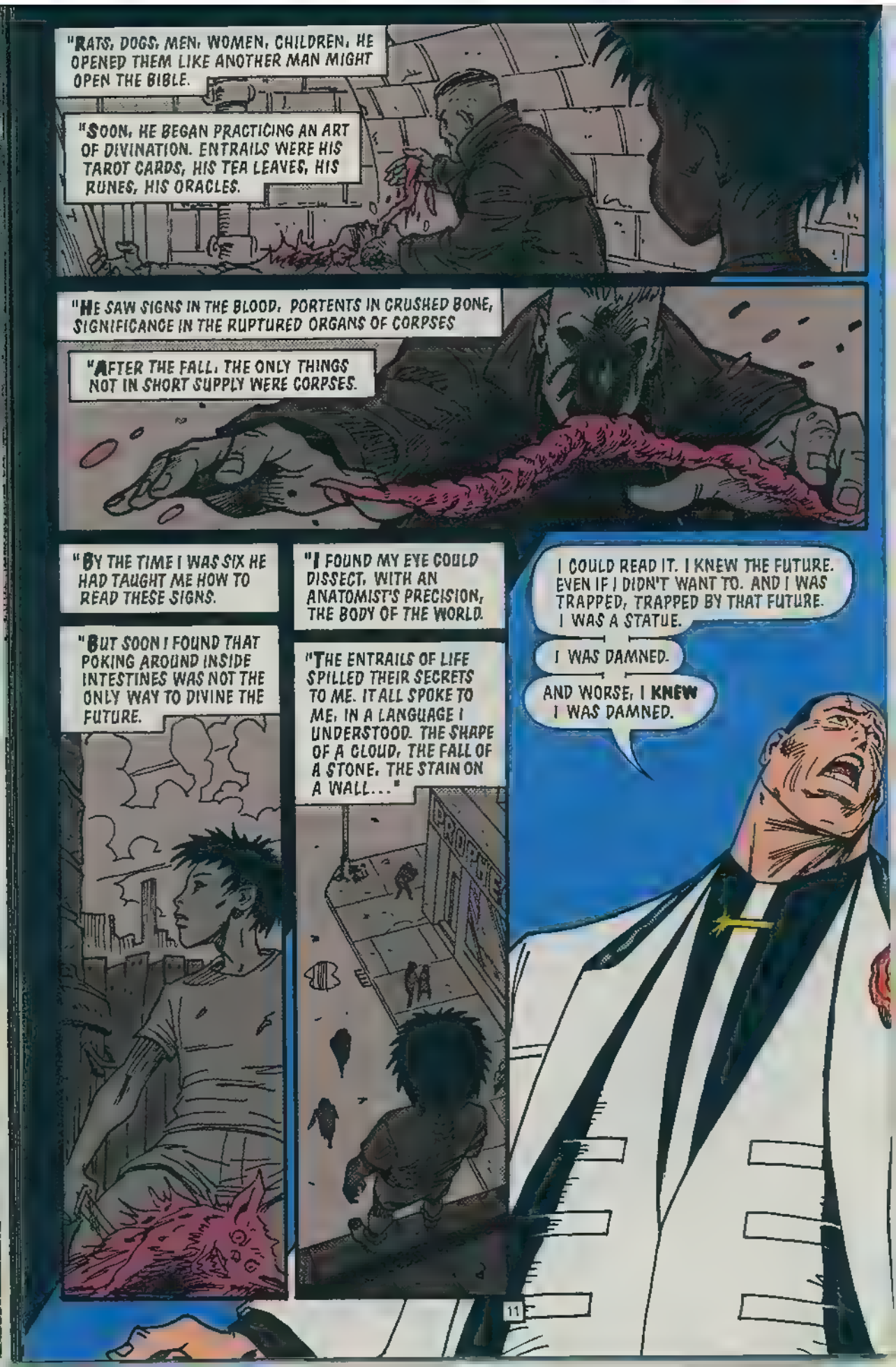


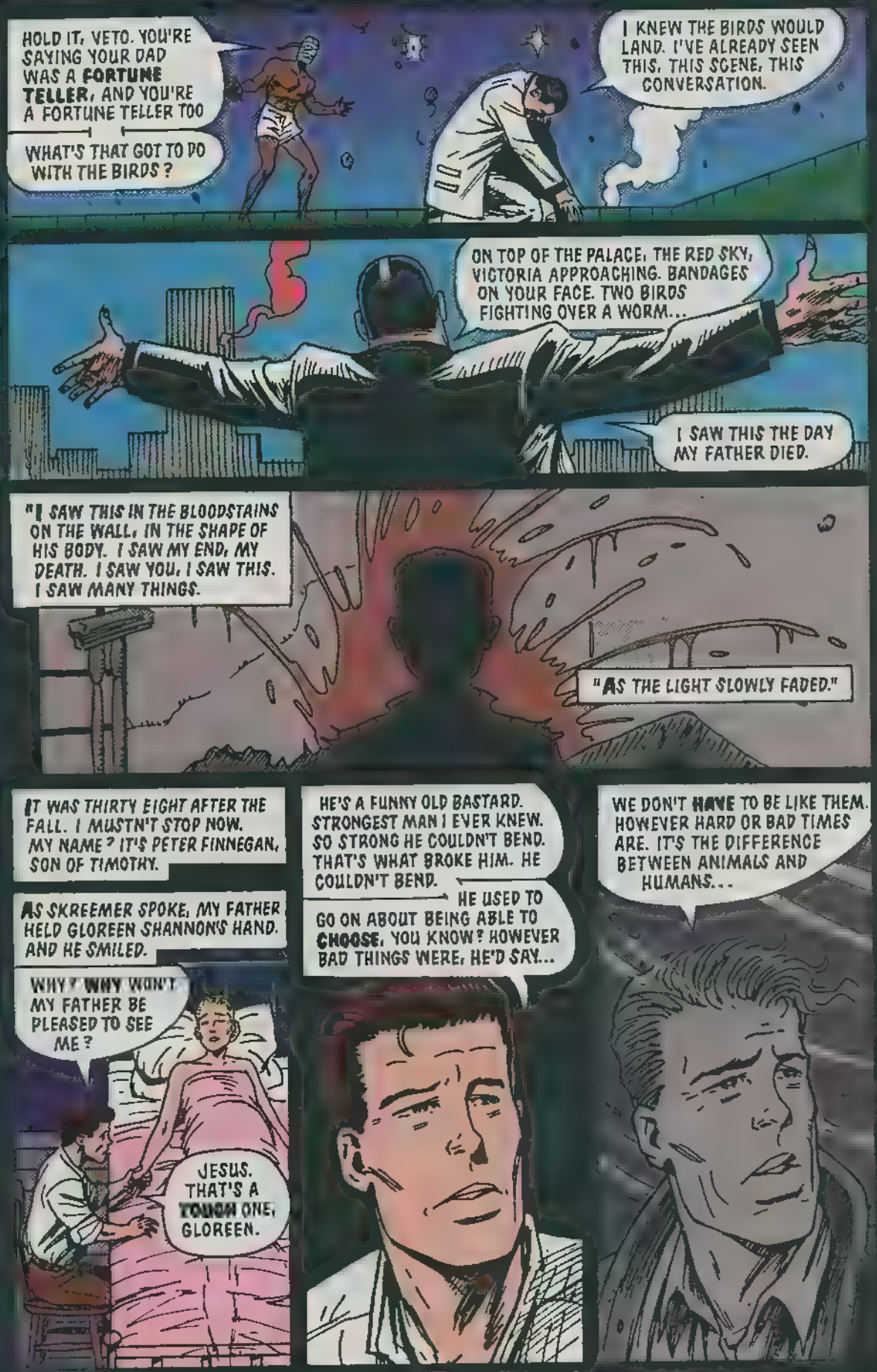
"MY FATHER SWAYED. HIS GRIP SLACKENED. I FELT THE CHASM PULLING ME DOWN, BACK DOWN INTO THE DARK...

"AND THEN MY FATHER STEPPED OVER THE EDGE..."


SEEM TO BE OVER THE WORST NOW, GLOREEN.
YEAH. IT'S EASING OFF AGAIN, A LITTLE...
HEY, THANKS, TIM. FOR STICKING WITH ME. THIS CITY'S FALLING APART, IF YOU HAD ANY SENSE YOU'D SPLIT, LEAVE ME...
GO BACK TO YOUR FOLKS OR SOMETHING...
NAH. NO POINT, GLOREEN. MY FATHER WOULDN'T BE PLEASED TO SEE ME.
IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL. IN THE DISTANCE THE THUNDER RUMBLED.
IN HIS SHABBY APARTMENT MY GRANDFATHER, CHARLES FINNEGAN, WAITED. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT FOR. HE JUST WAITED.
MY GRANDMOTHER, KARLA, WAS SEWING, THOUGH SHE'D RUN OUT OF PEOPLE TO SEW FOR.
MY GRANDFATHER'S EYES HAD ONCE BEEN BLUE AS THE SKY. NOW THEY HAD FADED TO SLATE GREY.
HE USED TO SING A SONG. A SONG CALLED FINNEGAN'S WAKE.
HE USED TO SING AND LAUGH, HOWEVER HARD TIMES WERE.
HE USED TO TRY SO HARD TO BE GOOD.
IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL. VICTORIA CHANDLER LOOKED ACROSS THE BURNING CITY.
SKREEMER'S FORCES ARE CRUMBLING. IT'S ALMOST OVER.
LOOK... HIS PALACE...

MY FATHER STEPPED OVER THE EDGE. I HEARD THE ABYSS CALL MY NAME. THEN I HEARD IT WHISPER "NOT YET".
MY FATHER STEPPED BACK.
WE BOTH LIVED.
BUT EVER SINCE, I'VE BEEN ON THE EDGE, LOOKING INTO THE ABYSS, HEARING THE ABYSS CALL MY NAME.
AND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ABYSS, IN THE DARK, I KNOW WHAT I'LL FIND.
I'LL FIND THE FIRST PERSON I MURDERED.
"LYING ON HER FILTHY BED IN THE FILTH OF BIRTH AND DEATH.
"SO MY FATHER RAISED ME, THOUGH HE NEVER STOPPED HATING ME, AND I NEVER STOPPED DESPISING HIM.
"I CANNOT REMEMBER A TIME WHEN I DIDN'T WISH HE HAD JUMPED THAT DAY, THAT DAY I KILLED MY MOTHER. JUMPED WITH ME IN HIS ARMS.
"HE BECAME INCREASINGLY STRANGE. ANATOMY, THE INNER COGS AND WHEELS OF LIFE, BECAME AN OBSESSION, A RELIGION...
"AT EVERY CHANCE HE OPENED THE BODIES OF THE DEAD. SOMETIMES HE DIDN'T EVEN WAIT FOR THEM TO DIE."


"RATS, DOGS, MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN. HE OPENED THEM LIKE ANOTHER MAN MIGHT OPEN THE BIBLE.
"SOON, HE BEGAN PRACTICING AN ART OF DIVINATION. ENTRAILS WERE HIS TAROT CARDS, HIS TEA LEAVES, HIS RUNES, HIS ORACLES.
"HE SAW SIGNS IN THE BLOOD, PORTENTS IN CRUSHED BONE, SIGNIFICANCE IN THE RUPTURED ORGANS OF CORPSES
"AFTER THE FALL, THE ONLY THINGS NOT IN SHORT SUPPLY WERE CORPSES.
"BY THE TIME I WAS SIX HE HAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO READ THESE SIGNS.
"I FOUND MY EYE COULD DISSECT, WITH AN ANATOMIST'S PRECISION, THE BODY OF THE WORLD.
"BUT SOON I FOUND THAT POKING AROUND INSIDE INTESTINES WAS NOT THE ONLY WAY TO DIVINE THE FUTURE.
"THE ENTRAILS OF LIFE SPILLED THEIR SECRETS TO ME. IT ALL SPOKE TO ME, IN A LANGUAGE I UNDERSTOOD. THE SHAPE OF A CLOUD, THE FALL OF A STONE, THE STAIN ON A WALL..."
I COULD READ IT. I KNEW THE FUTURE. EVEN IF I DIDN'T WANT TO. AND I WAS TRAPPED, TRAPPED BY THAT FUTURE. I WAS A STATUE.
I WAS DAMNED.
AND WORSE, I KNEW I WAS DAMNED.


HOLD IT, VETO. YOU'RE SAYING YOUR DAD WAS A FORTUNE TELLER, AND YOU'RE A FORTUNE TELLER TOO
WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH THE BIRDS?
I KNEW THE BIRDS WOULD LAND. I'VE ALREADY SEEN THIS. THIS SCENE, THIS CONVERSATION.
ON TOP OF THE PALACE, THE RED SKY, VICTORIA APPROACHING. BANDAGES ON YOUR FACE. TWO BIRDS FIGHTING OVER A WORM...
I SAW THIS THE DAY MY FATHER DIED.
"I SAW THIS IN THE BLOODSTAINS ON THE WALL. IN THE SHAPE OF HIS BODY. I SAW MY END, MY DEATH. I SAW YOU. I SAW THIS. I SAW MANY THINGS.
"AS THE LIGHT SLOWLY FADED."
IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL. I MUSTN'T STOP NOW. MY NAME? IT'S PETER FINNEGAN, SON OF TIMOTHY.
AS SKREEMER SPOKE, MY FATHER HELD GLOREEN SHANNON'S HAND. AND HE SMILED.
WHY? WHY WON'T MY FATHER BE PLEASED TO SEE ME?
JESUS. THAT'S A TOUGH ONE, GLOREEN.
HE'S A FUNNY OLD BASTARD. STRONGEST MAN I EVER KNEW. SO STRONG HE COULDN'T BEND. THAT'S WHAT BROKE HIM. HE COULDN'T BEND.
HE USED TO GO ON ABOUT BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE, YOU KNOW? HOWEVER BAD THINGS WERE, HE'D SAY...
WE DON'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THEM. HOWEVER HARD OR BAD TIMES ARE. IT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANIMALS AND HUMANS...

"WE CAN CHOOSE. WE MUST BE ABLE TO. OTHERWISE..."
OTHERWISE THERE'S NO POINT.
HE HAD THIS OLD SONG CALLED FINNEGAN'S WAKE, ABOUT A MAN WHO DIED AND THEN CAME ALIVE AGAIN. THERE WAS A BOOK CALLED FINNEGAN'S WAKE TOO...
YOU STILL LOVE HIM, DON'T YOU?
OH, SURE. THAT'S WHY I DO THE ONE THING THAT'D DESTROY HIM THE MOST...
THAT'S WHY I COME AND WORK FOR THE SKREEMER.
AH, IT'S ALWAYS THE SON THAT LOVES HIS DAD THE MOST THAT LEAVES HOME, THAT BREAKS HIS PA'S HEART.
SONS WERE MADE TO FIGHT THEIR FATHERS. IT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND, HONEY.
VETO, THIS IS CRAZY, YOU CAN'T...
IT'S TRUE. I'M NOT FREE. MY LIFE'S BEEN PREDETERMINED. I'M A STATUE. OR A PUPPET. YES, A PUPPET, AND SOMEONE PULLS THE STRINGS.
I HAVE NO SAY IN THE MATTER. I HAVE NO CHOICE. IT'S ALL BEEN WRITTEN.
AND I'VE ALWAYS SEEN WHAT'S WRITTEN.

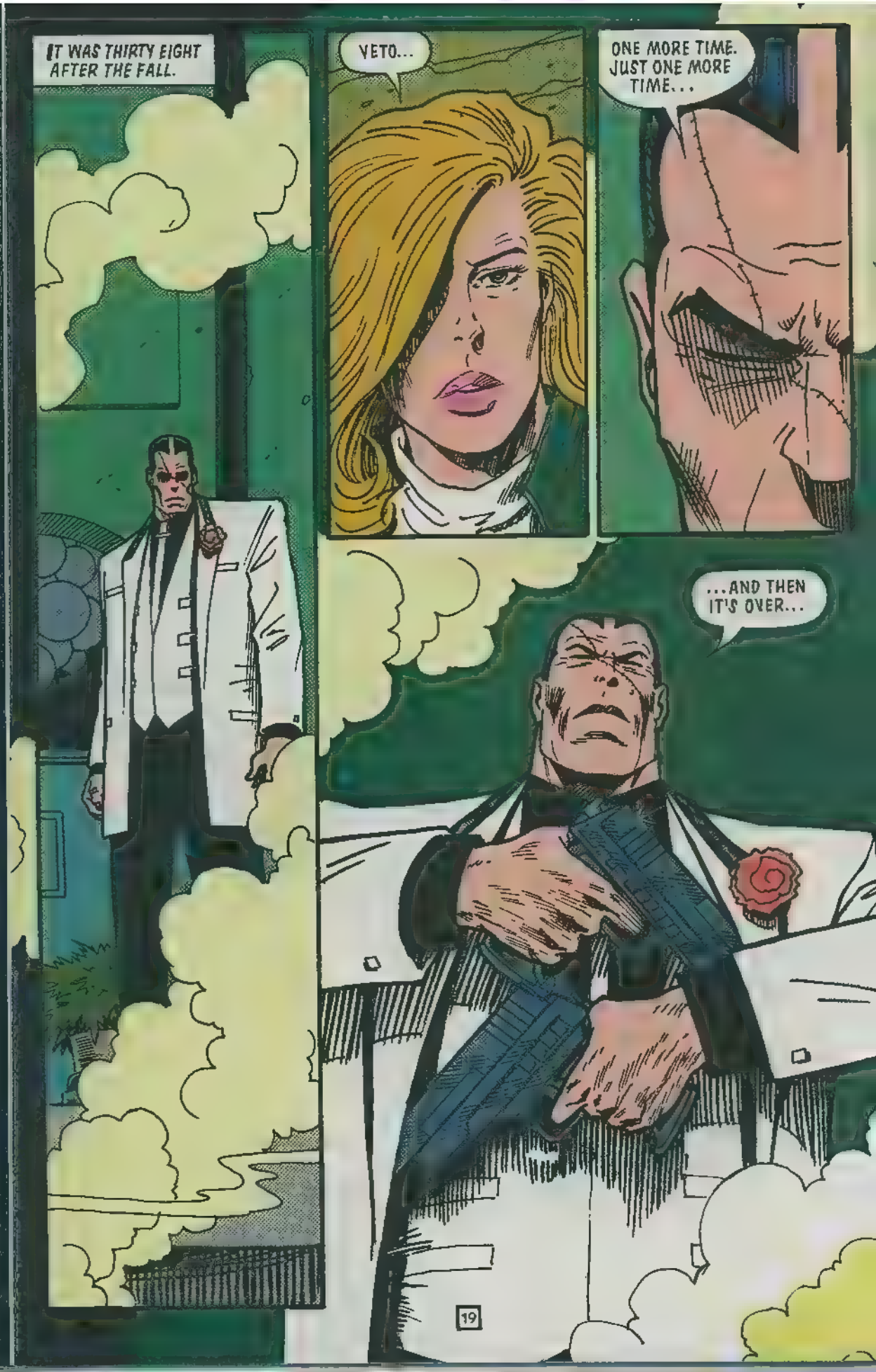
I'VE TRIED TO BREAK THE FUTURE. TRIED TO ESCAPE. IT NEVER WORKS.
ONLY ONE THING, ONLY ONE THING MIGHT WORK. ALL MY LIFE, I'VE FELT A GHOST FUTURE, A PHANTOM DESTINY
A CHILD.
"AT THE AGE OF SEVEN I SAW THAT I WOULD NOT HAVE A CHILD, EVER. NOT A HEALTHY, LIVING, NORMAL CHILD."
AOOEEW.. THINK IT'S MOVING AGAIN...
BUT I'VE BEEN HAUNTED BY TH S OTHER FUTURE. I'VE SEEN A BABY. A SON. AND I KNOW, IF I CAN HAVE THIS SON, THE FUTURE WILL CRACK.
IF I CAN ESCAPE DESTINY ONCE, MY DESTINY WILL CRUMBLE. I'LL BE FREE.
"I SAW VICKY COULDN'T DO IT. SAW SHE'D NEVER HAVE CHILDREN, LET ALONE MINE. SHE COULDN'T BREAK THE FUTURE. SHE WAS THE FUTURE.
"SHE WAS THE ONE WHO WAS GOING TO KILL ME.
"BUT CLAUDIA. F.RST TIME I SAW CLAUDIA, IN THE WHYTE HOUSE, WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN, I THOUGHT SHE COULD DO IT.
"I THOUGHT SHE COULD BE THE ONE."

"WHEN SHE WAS MURDERED, WHEN I BENT OVER HER DEAD BODY, AND THE DEAD CHILD INSIDE HER, I HEARD THE PRISON DOORS SLAM AGAIN.
"AND THEN I SAW GLOREEN, GLOREEN SHANNON. YOU REMEMBER, YOU WERE WITH ME
"I SAW A PHANTOM CHILD IN HER BELLY. A HEALTHY, NORMAL CHILD. IT'S YOU, I THOUGHT"
WAIT A MINUTE YOU'RE SAYING YOU'VE SEEN... YOU'VE SEEN EVERYTHING?
MOSTLY EVERYTHING. THE MAJOR SCENES, SOME MINOR SCENES. IT HASN'T COME IN ANY ORDER.
I EVEN SAW THAT ON THE MORNING I WOULD BETRAY YOU I'D SHAVE MY HAIR, CUT A RUBICON I'D BEEN CROSSING ALL MY LIFE.
DIDN'T WANT TO. TRIED NOT TO. BUT DID.
THAT'S WHY YOU WERE NEVER QUITE HUMAN. WHY YOU WERE AN OLD MAN EVEN WHEN YOU WERE A KID...
AND YOU KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ME?
YOU KNEW...THEY'D DROP A RAT ONTO MY FACE, KNEW MY FACE WOULD BE RUINED... YOU KNEW, DAMN YOU...
HAD NO CHOICE.
AND YOU STILL LET IT HAPPEN?
EVEN THIS SCENE, EXACTLY AS I SAW IT, YOUR MOUNTING ANGER, SOON YOU WILL STRIKE ME. I WILL BRUSH YOU ASIDE

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE? KNOWING HOW AND WHEN YOU WILL DIE? KNOWING THAT NO MATTER WHAT YOU TRY TO DO, YOU CAN NEVER MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?
THE DAY MY FATHER DIED I SAW MY OWN DEATH TOO, IN THE SHAPE OF HIS BLOOD ON THE WALL...
"I SAW HOW I WOULD GO BACK INTO MY PALACE, VERY SOON NOW, AND VICKY WILL BE THERE. FIRES. FIGHTING.
"I WILL BE WOUNDED IN THE ARM. I WILL TRY TO LEAP ACROSS A SHATTERED BALCONY..."
"I'LL ALMOST MAKE IT, BUT MY HANDS WILL SLIP FROM THE EDGE...
BULLSHIT, VETO. YOU COULD'VE DONE SOMETHING. YOU COULD HAVE CUT THE STRINGS. YOU COULD HAVE STEPPED OFF THE EDGE.
GLOREEN WAS RIGHT. SHE USED TO SAY YOU JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE
BALLS!
GNNNGNN
"AND I WILL FALL. FALL. FALL. THE END."

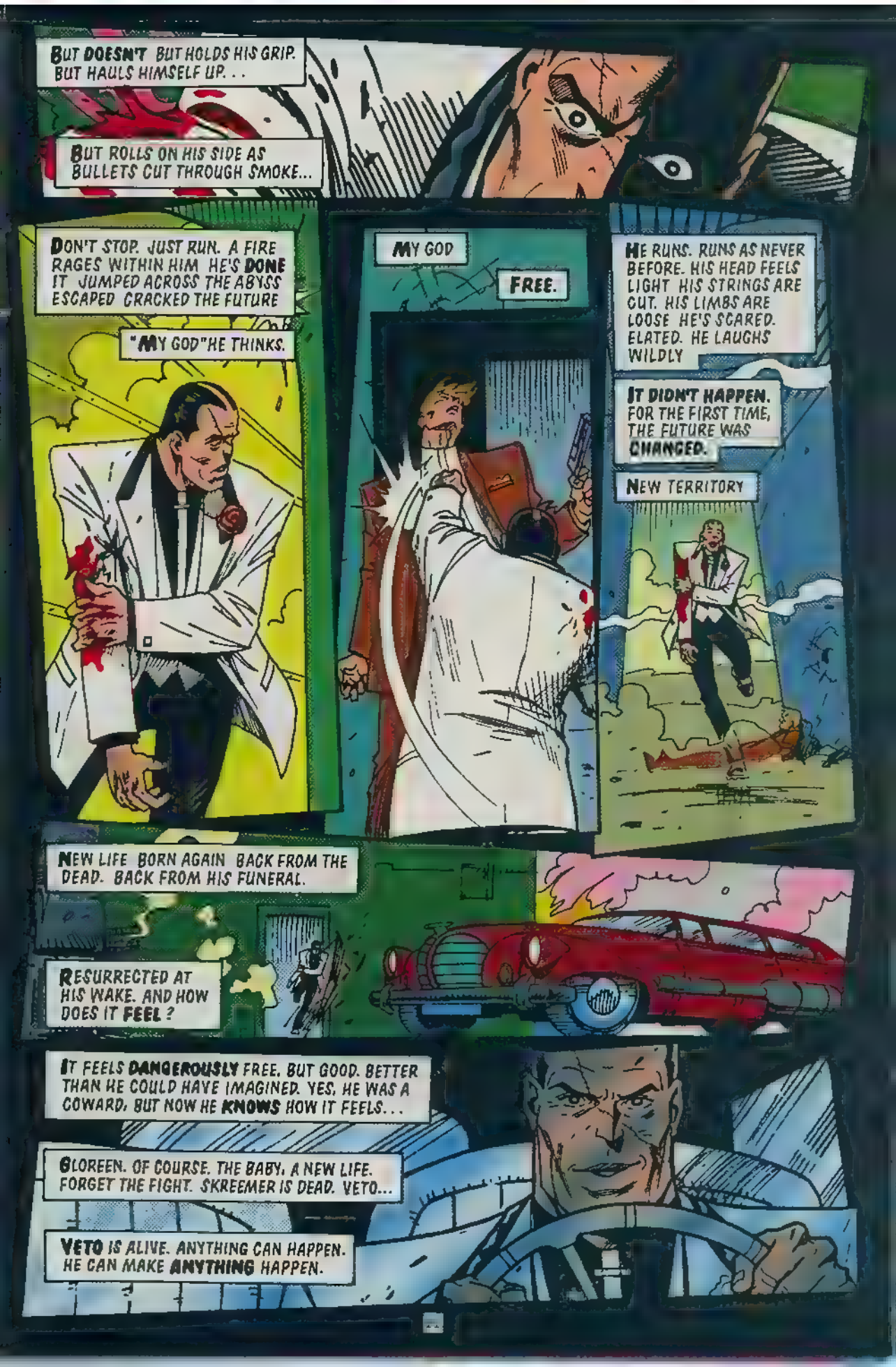
IT'S...IT'S TRUE, VETO. YOU'RE SCARED, SHITSCARED OF BEING FREE. THAT'S WHY YOU MADE SURE BUD MACADAM WOULD BETRAY YOU.
THAT'S WHY YOU HAVEN'T STEPPED OFF THE EDGE...
AND WHAT ABOUT CLAUDIA? DEAR, PREGNANT CLAUDIA...
"YOU REMEMBER? REMEMBER THAT DAY, BACK IN TWENTY FOUR AFTER THE FALL?"
I'M SORRY, VETO. SOME OF BORGES' BOYS GOT THROUGH SECURITY...
THEY GOT TO CLAUDIA...
JUST HOW DID BORGES' BOYS KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO FIND YOUR WOMAN, HUH? HOW COULD THEY HAVE GOT TO YOUR CHILD?
UNLESS YOU TIPPED THEM OFF?
NO!
AND WHAT ABOUT GLOREEN, EH? WHAT'VE YOU DONE TO STOP HER CHILD FROM BREAKING YOUR GODDAMN FUTURE?
YOU JUST HAVE TO BE DAMNED, DON'T YOU? NOTHING BUT DAMNATION'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR A MOTHER KILLER...
NO!
I'M SORRY, GLOREEN, SHE'LL HAVE THE CHILD. I UNDERSTAND NOW. SHE'LL HAVE THE CHILD, BUT TOO LATE. IT'S TIME...
VICKY'S ENTERING THE PALACE. TIME TO DIE. I'M COMING, MOTHER...
GOODBYE, DUTCH. I'M SORRY. IT'S OVER...

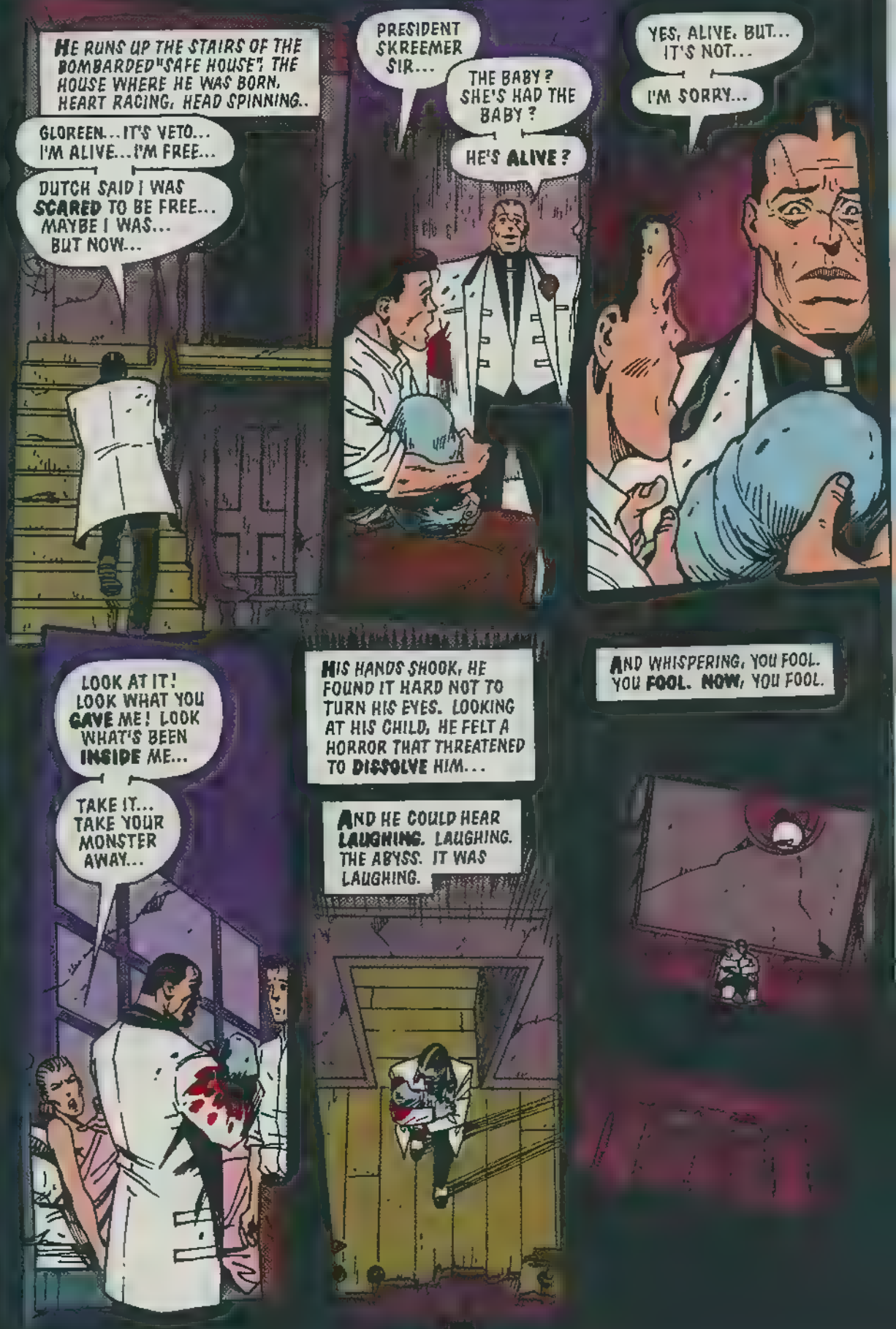
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
CHAKKA
CHAKKA
CHAKKA
CHAKKA
BLAM
BLAM
PUSH, GLOREEN... JUST A LITTLE MORE... JUST A LITTLE MORE...
REMEMBER, DUTCH AMSTERDAM'S NOT TO BE TOUCHED...
PRESIDENT CHANDLER... LOOK...
HERE IT COMES...


IT WAS THIRTY EIGHT AFTER THE FALL.
VETO...
ONE MORE TIME. JUST ONE MORE TIME...
...AND THEN IT'S OVER...

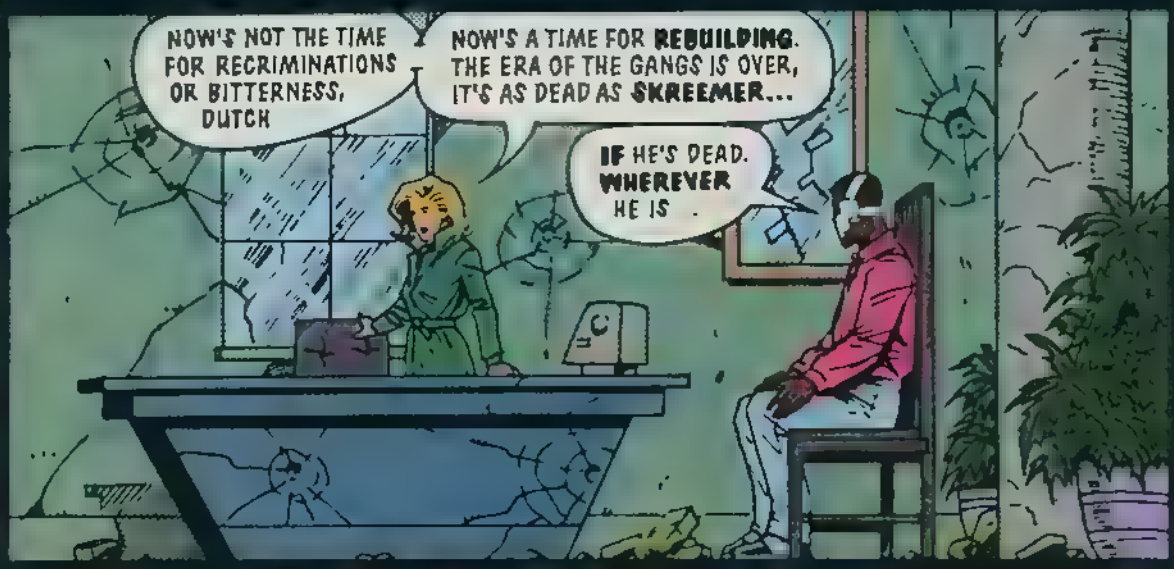
BLAM! BLAM!
AH. AH, YES. THE SHATTERED BALCONY. THE ABYSS...
VETO...

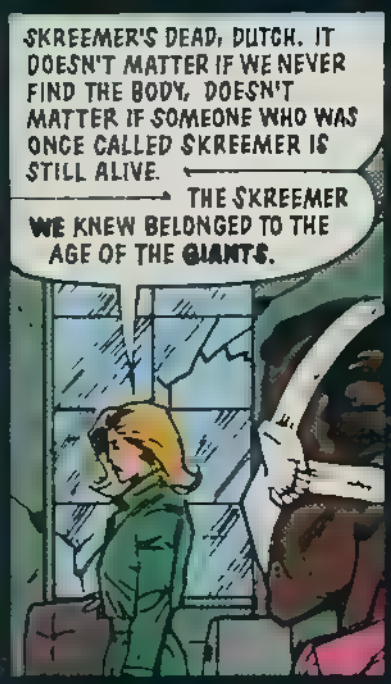
NO USE FIGHTING. NOWHERE TO RUN. PUT THE GUN DOWN, VETO. GIVE YOURSELF UP.
IF ONLY I **COULD**, VICKY.
YOU'RE LOOKING GOOD.
YOU ALWAYS WERE... THE ONLY ONE... WHO EVER **MOVED** ME, VICKY...
BE KIND TO DUTCHY.
YES. THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENS. THIS IS HOW IT ENDS. IN THE AIR. STRUNG ACROSS THE CHASM.
VETO!
STRETCHING FOR THE OTHER SIDE...
HANDS GRASP THE ROUGH EDGE. HANDS SLIP. FINGERNAILS TEAR AT CRUMBLING MORTAR. GOING, GOING...
SKREEMER FALLS THE END.
SKREEMER FALLS.

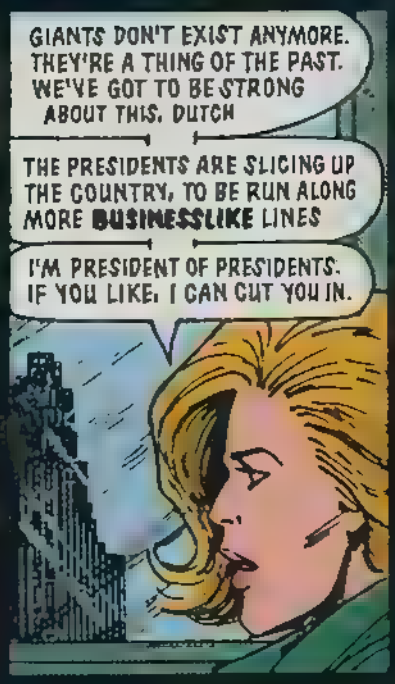

BUT DOESN'T BUT HOLDS HIS GRIP. BUT HAULS HIMSELF UP. . .
BUT ROLLS ON HIS SIDE AS BULLETS CUT THROUGH SMOKE...
DON'T STOP. JUST RUN. A FIRE RAGES WITHIN HIM HE'S DONE IT JUMPED ACROSS THE ABYSS ESCAPED CRACKED THE FUTURE
"MY GOD" HE THINKS.
MY GOD
FREE.
HE RUNS. RUNS AS NEVER BEFORE. HIS HEAD FEELS LIGHT HIS STRINGS ARE CUT. HIS LIMBS ARE LOOSE HE'S SCARED. ELATED. HE LAUGHS WILDLY
IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE FUTURE WAS CHANGED.
NEW TERRITORY
NEW LIFE BORN AGAIN BACK FROM THE DEAD. BACK FROM HIS FUNERAL.
RESURRECTED AT HIS WAKE. AND HOW DOES IT FEEL?
IT FEELS DANGEROUSLY FREE. BUT GOOD. BETTER THAN HE COULD HAVE IMAGINED. YES, HE WAS A COWARD, BUT NOW HE KNOWS HOW IT FEELS...
GLOREEN. OF COURSE. THE BABY, A NEW LIFE. FORGET THE FIGHT. SKREEMER IS DEAD. VETO...
VETO IS ALIVE. ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN. HE CAN MAKE ANYTHING HAPPEN.


HE RUNS UP THE STAIRS OF THE BOMBARDED "SAFE HOUSE", THE HOUSE WHERE HE WAS BORN, HEART RACING, HEAD SPINNING..
GLOREEN... IT'S VETO... I'M ALIVE... I'M FREE...
DUTCH SAID I WAS SCARED TO BE FREE... MAYBE I WAS... BUT NOW...
PRESIDENT SKREEMER SIR...
THE BABY? SHE'S HAD THE BABY?
HE'S ALIVE?
YES, ALIVE. BUT... IT'S NOT...
I'M SORRY...
AND WHISPERING, YOU FOOL. YOU FOOL. NOW, YOU FOOL.
HIS HANDS SHOOK, HE FOUND IT HARD NOT TO TURN HIS EYES. LOOKING AT HIS CHILD, HE FELT A HORROR THAT THREATENED TO DISSOLVE HIM...
AND HE COULD HEAR LAUGHING. LAUGHING. THE ABYSS. IT WAS LAUGHING.
LOOK AT IT! LOOK WHAT YOU GAVE ME! LOOK WHAT'S BEEN INSIDE ME...
TAKE IT... TAKE YOUR MONSTER AWAY...

NOW
VETO, DON'T
I'M PRES
ANY TAKE WHA
BANG!


NOW'S NOT THE TIME FOR RECRIMINATIONS OR BITTERNESS, DUTCH
NOW'S A TIME FOR REBUILDING. THE ERA OF THE GANGS IS OVER, IT'S AS DEAD AS SKREEMER...
IF HE'S DEAD. WHEREVER HE IS .


SKREEMER'S DEAD, DUTCH. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF WE NEVER FIND THE BODY, DOESN'T MATTER IF SOMEONE WHO WAS ONCE CALLED SKREEMER IS STILL ALIVE.
THE SKREEMER WE KNEW BELONGED TO THE AGE OF THE GIANTS.


GIANTS DON'T EXIST ANYMORE. THEY'RE A THING OF THE PAST. WE'VE GOT TO BE STRONG ABOUT THIS, DUTCH
THE PRESIDENTS ARE SLICING UP THE COUNTRY, TO BE RUN ALONG MORE BUSINESSLIKE LINES
I'M PRESIDENT OF PRESIDENTS. IF YOU LIKE, I CAN CUT YOU IN.

WE'RE LIKE PARENTS, DUTCH. WE GOTTA RAISE THE COUNTRY. TEACH IT HOW TO BEHAVE, HOW TO...
DUTCH?

DUTCH?
DUTCH, WHERE ARE YOU?

DUTCH AMSTERDAM AND VICTORIA CHANDLER NEVER MET AGAIN.
VETO SKREEMER'S BODY WAS NEVER OFFICIALLY FOUND. IT WAS RUMORED TO HAVE BEEN SECRETLY CREMATED.

MY GRANDFATHER STIRRED FROM A LIGHT SLEEP. THERE WAS SOMEONE AT THE DOOR.
HE WONDERED IF THIS IS WHAT HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR.
AH... I'M SORRY, I KNOW I SHOULDN'T HAVE BUT I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYWHERE ELSE.
SHE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD...
WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, MAN. THE GIRL'S OUT ON HER FEET.
KARLA, COME SEE TO HER WHILE I GET THE SPARE MATTRESS DOWN.
THEY CARED FOR GLOREEN SHANNON, AND GLOREEN PULLED THROUGH. SHE WAS STRONG, PROBABLY STRONGER THAN ALL OF US.
WE FINNEGANS SEEM TO BE RATHER A FLAWED LOT. WE TAKE THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY.
WE SEEM TO WANT TOO MUCH, WE SEEM TO HURT TOO EASY. BUT THOUGH WE'RE SMALL, NOT GIANTS, WE CAN MAKE A LOT OF NOISE.
ESPECIALLY WHEN WE SING.

OF COURSE, **GLOREEN** BECAME A FINNEGAN, TOO.

I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY I AM RELATED TO A **GIANT.**

TO VETO SKREEMER.

I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY I WAS HIS CHILD. HIS **PHANTOM** CHILD. GLOREEN **DID** HAVE A SON. A HEALTHY, NORMAL (ALMOST) SON.

JUST AS VETO SKREEMER HAD FORESEEN.

BUT NOT TO SKREEMER. TO MY **FATHER.** TO TIMOTHY FINNEGAN. A CHILD CALLED **PETER FINNEGAN.** ME.

I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S GIVEN ME ANY RIGHT TO TELL THE STORY OF THE SKREEMER, OF THE ERA OF THE GANGS AND THE AGE OF THE GIANTS. BUT I'VE TOLD IT, RIGHT OR NO RIGHT.

AND NOW IT'S TOLD, I CAN LEAVE, I CAN DREAM OF MY GRANDPARENTS. I CAN VISIT MY MOTHER AND FATHER. I CAN PICK UP MY OWN CHILD, I CAN STRUGGLE WITH **VICO** AND **JOYCE** AND GET DRUNK WHEN I HAVE TO...

I CAN SING THE SONG MY FATHER AND GRANDFATHER TAUGHT ME.

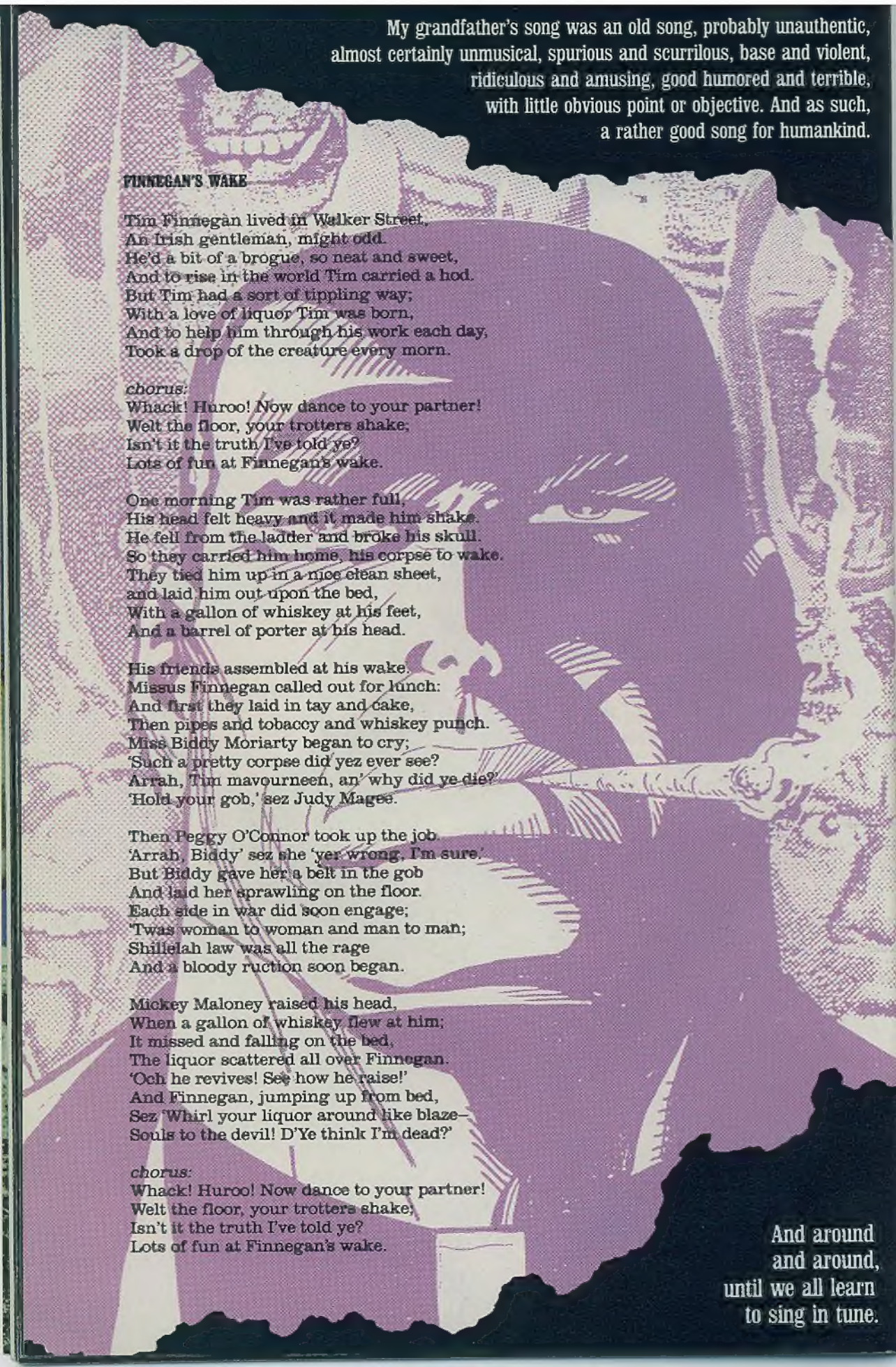
OUR SONG. THE SONG OF DEATH AND LIFE AND BIRTH, OF DRUNKS AND WHORES AND THE GOOD AND THE BAD AND ALL THE STUFF INBETWEEN.

AND SKREEMER? FREE WILL? GOD? DESTINY? LIFE? WHAT DID, WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

MY GRANDFATHER WOULD SAY, "LIFE GOES ROUND IN CIRCLES, AND IS FAR TOO COMPLICATED TO UNDERSTAND."

I WOULD SAY, "I'M JUST A SINGER."

AND ISN'T IT THE TRUTH I'VE TOLD YE?
LOTS OF FUN AT FINNEGAN'S WAKE.
THE END



My grandfather's song was an old song, probably unauthentic, almost certainly unmusical, spurious and scurrilous, base and violent, ridiculous and amusing, good humored and terrible, with little obvious point or objective. And as such, a rather good song for humankind.

FINNEGAN'S WAKE

Tim Finnegan lived in Walker Street,
An Irish gentleman, might odd.
He'd a bit of a brogue, so neat and sweet,
And to rise in the world Tim carried a hod.
But Tim had a sort of tippling way;
With a love of liquor Tim was born,
And to help him through his work each day,
Took a drop of the creature every morn.

chorus:
Whack! Huroo! Now dance to your partner!
Welt the floor, your trotters shake;
Isn't it the truth I've told ye?
Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake.

One morning Tim was rather full,
His head felt heavy and it made him shake.
He fell from the ladder and broke his skull.
So they carried him home, his corpse to wake.
They tied him up in a nice clean sheet,
and laid him out upon the bed,
With a gallon of whiskey at his feet,
And a barrel of porter at his head.

His friends assembled at his wake.
Missus Finnegan called out for lunch:
And first they laid in tay and cake,
Then pipes and tobaccy and whiskey punch.
Miss Biddy Moriarty began to cry;
'Such a pretty corpse did yez ever see?
Arrah, Tim mavourneen, an' why did ye die?'
'Hold your gob,' sez Judy Magee.

Then Peggy O'Connor took up the job.
'Arrah, Biddy' sez she 'yer wrong, I'm sure.'
But Biddy gave her a belt in the gob
And laid her sprawling on the floor.
Each side in war did soon engage;
'Twas woman to woman and man to man;
Shillelah law was all the rage
And a bloody ruction soon began.

Mickey Maloney raised his head,
When a gallon of whiskey flew at him;
It missed and falling on the bed,
The liquor scattered all over Finnegan.
'Och he revives! See how he raise!'
And Finnegan, jumping up from bed,
Sez 'Whirl your liquor around like blaze–
Souls to the devil! D'Ye think I'm dead?'

chorus:
Whack! Huroo! Now dance to your partner!
Welt the floor, your trotters shake;
Isn't it the truth I've told ye?
Lots of fun at Finnegan's wake.

And around
and around,
until we all learn
to sing in tune.